



## SULLY SPOTLIGHT

October 2005



# Halloween Safety Tips



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Halloween Safety Tips</i>	1
<i>Identity Theft</i>	2
<i>Why 21?</i>	3
<i>What's in Your Car?</i>	4
<i>Child Seat Inspection</i>	5
<i>Traffic Trivia</i>	5
<i>CAC Corner</i>	6
<i>Neighborhood Watch Training Scheduled</i>	6
<i>Parking Violations</i>	6
<i>Crime Flash—Be a Good Witness!</i>	7

October 31st is a night celebrated by thousands of children dressed up as ghouls, goblins, princesses, cartoon characters, action heroes and many other themes. There are several safety tips and general practices that can help ensure the safety of young ones on this night.



When buying costumes, make sure they are flame retardant so little ones aren't put in harms way. While dressing children in costumes, make sure the costumes are short enough to prevent the children from tripping. If at all possible, use make up instead of masks to help little ones see where they are walking. If the costume is dark, put reflective tape on the costume and have your child carry a flashlight or glow stick so they are visible in the dark. Make sure children are supervised by an adult while out in the neighborhoods. Always make sure you leave the houses with the same number of children you arrived with.

### Events of Interest for October 2005

- \* Monday, Oct. 10—**Columbus Day**
- \* Wednesday, Oct. 12 @ 7:00 p.m.—**Community Neighborhood Watch training**, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd.
- \* Tuesday, Oct. 18 @ 7:30 p.m.—**CAC Meeting**, 4900

If you are the recipient of trick-or-treaters at your house, make their travel to your door safe from open flames and objects that may catch their costumes. Have your porch light on and any other lighting you may have in your yard. If you pass out candy, inspect it before the little ones start arriving. Make sure wrappers are sealed. Any candy with open or torn wrappers should be kept out of the goodie bowl. Make sure pets are kept away from where the trick-or-treaters will be received at your house.



Taking a few extra minutes to use the tips mentioned above will help ensure children have a safe and fun Halloween night.



# Identity Theft

By  
PFC Vincent DarConte

When you mention identity theft, most people may say “I watch my credit cards. I am careful who I give my information out to. I never give my information out over the Internet.” These are all good practices that should be followed by everyone.

What happens when people can not do all this for themselves? What can be done when the person whose identity is stolen is deceased? This is a new trend that is beginning to surface across the country. It is one more thing you need to look out for after a loved one has passed away.

The following steps are recommended for all deaths. Notify all entities by telephone and in writing. Send all correspondence certified, return receipt requested. Keep photocopies of all correspondence, including letters that you send. Obtain at least 12 copies of the official death certificate when it becomes available. Immediately notify relevant credit card companies, banks, mortgage companies, and loan/lien holders of the death. Contact the credit reporting agencies and request a “deceased” alert be placed on the report. If there is a surviving spouse or other joint account holder, make sure to notify the company that the account needs to be listed in the surviving person’s name alone. These are just a few examples of tasks that need to be completed.

To obtain information on how to protect your loved ones and yourself, visit the Identity Theft Resource Center at [www.idtheftcenter.org](http://www.idtheftcenter.org). This is a nonprofit organization dedicated exclusively to identity theft. It provides consumer and victim support and advises governmental agencies, legislators and companies about this evolving and growing crime. Visit the Federal Trade Commission [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) to obtain additional information on identity theft. The Federal Trade Commission has a four point bulletin on how to report identity theft to the government and credit bureaus.

*Source Information: Identity Theft Resource Center  
Federal Trade Commission*

# Why 21?



## What's Magic About the Number 21?

Are you wondering what the deal is with the 21 minimum drinking age law? Sure, it's a law but it doesn't always feel like it. It's in all 50 states but do people pay attention to it? You might question why the laws were written with 21 as the minimum drinking age, what's so special about that age, and how the law came to be. Here's a lowdown on the most relevant information.

## A Walk Down Memory Lane

Some folks think 21 was pulled out of the air. But despite what you may think, there are some pretty good reasons that age 21 was selected.

Back in the late 1960's and early 70's a number of states lowered their drinking age from 21 to 18. In many of these states, research documented a significant increase in highway deaths of the teens affected by these laws. So, in the early 1980's a movement began to raise the drinking age back to 21. After the law changed back to 21, many of the states were monitored to check the difference in highway fatalities. Researchers found that teenage deaths in fatal car crashes dropped considerably - in some cases up to 28% - when the laws were moved back to 21.

Like it or not, it is clear that more young people were killed on the highways when the drinking age was 18. Back in 1982 when many of the states had minimum drinking ages of 18, 55% of all fatal crashes involving youth drivers involved alcohol. Since then, the alcohol-related traffic fatality rate has been cut in half! Research estimates that from 1975-2002 more than 21,000 lives have been saved. Hard to argue with that!

## A Strain in the Brain

According to the book *Buzzed*, the use of alcohol by young people is especially frightening. We all hear about the dangers and consequences of underage drinking, but most of us know very little about how alcohol affects the brains of young people.

*Buzzed* says we should look at what we do know about young brains like the fact that they don't finish developing until a person is around 20 years old. And one of the last regions to mature is intimately involved with the ability to plan and make complex judgments. Young brains are built to acquire new memories and are "built to learn." *Buzzed* reports that, "It is no accident that people are educated in our society during their early years, when they have more capacity for memory and learning. However, with this added memory capacity may come additional risks associated with the use of alcohol." Apparently on studies using animals, young brains are vulnerable to dangerous effects of alcohol, especially on learning and memory function. If this is true of people, then young people who drink may be "powerfully impairing the brain functions on which they rely so heavily for learning." So, in case there wasn't enough pressure to perform at school, at your job, or just in life, alcohol can prevent your use of your own brain.

So in answer to the question "Why?" the 21 minimum age drinking laws were established to save your brain and your life.

### Sources:

- Kuhn, Cynthia, Swartzwelder, Scott, and Wilson, Wilkie. *Buzzed -- The Straight Facts About the Most Used and Abused Drugs from Alcohol to Ecstasy*.
- *1997 Youth Fatal Car Crash and Alcohol Facts*. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- *Youth Impaired Driving Issues Compendium*. Mothers Against Drunk Driving.



## *What's in Your Car?*



How secure are valuables in your car? Just because you lock your vehicle doors does not mean your valuables are safe. What about your trunk? If someone breaks into your car, they have immediate access to your trunk. The easiest way to ensure your valuables are safe is to take them with you!

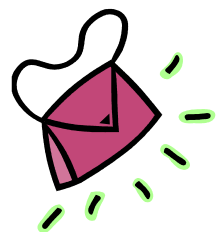
The Sully District Police Station handles numerous calls each week for vehicles broken into or entered into through unlocked doors. Items most often reported missing include stereos, laptops, purses, cell phones and money. If you have a detachable face plate on your car stereo, take it with you when you exit the car. Laptops, purses, cell phones, money and any other items of value should be taken with you as well. Parking your vehicle in your driveway unfortunately does not mean you are safe from having your vehicle broken into and rummaged through. Always lock your car doors no matter if you are parked in the street or in your driveway. Park in well lit areas when at all possible. If you have a light in your driveway, turn it on at night to help deter someone from entering your property during the night.

Vehicles parked in school parking lots, business lots and metro lots need to be safeguarded as well. When going to work, take the minimal amount of property as possible with you to avoid leaving items in your car. If you know you are only going to work, carry your identification and possibly one credit card with you in case of an emergency. Leave all other credit cards and checks at home in a safe place.

It is important to notify police of any crime. Crime trends are tracked according to reports that are made. By failing to report crime, individuals make it difficult for the police department to focus on communities that are in need of extra patrols. Police are also able to return property that may be recovered after an arrest is made.

One way to help fight crime in your neighborhood is to join or start up a Neighborhood Watch. Neighborhood Watch is a program in which citizens become extra eyes and ears for the police department. By calling in suspicious persons, vehicles and crimes, you help police protect your community. In Fairfax County there are 1.35 officers per 1,000 people. This means that in order to keep crime down, the police rely on citizens to report incidents. Fairfax County is a safe county due to the citizens who call in to report activity. By being involved, you help keep your community safe. Crime does not know boundaries. However, by being diligent and proactive, citizens can help keep crime from invading their neighborhoods.

Crime prevention is a combined effort between citizens and the police. One cannot do it alone. It takes cooperation and communication in order to be effective. By taking extra steps to safeguard your property, you help deter crime. It only takes a few extra minutes to protect yourself. However, a police investigation of a crime may take months to work. Preventing crime is the key to a safer community.



## *Sully District Station Child Seat Inspections*

Is your child seat installed properly? Is it the correct seat for the child's age and weight? Did you know that your Sully District Station offers free child seat inspections by certified technicians?

Next available dates:    Thursday, October 6, 2005    5:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.  
                                 Thursday, October 13, 2005    5:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.  
                                 Thursday, October 20, 2005    5:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.  
                                 Thursday, October 27, 2005    5:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.



No appointment is necessary. Our technicians request that you make an effort to install your child safety seats yourself, so that they may properly inspect and make adjustments, as necessary. For additional child seat inspection times, you may call the Fairfax County Operations Support Bureau at 703-280-0559.



## **Traffic Trivia**

**Is passing on the shoulder (paved and unpaved) legal in Virginia?**

The answer is **NO** unless signs are posted that allow such passing.

**Code of Virginia §46.2-841. When overtaking vehicle may pass on right.**

A. The driver of a vehicle may overtake and pass to the right of another vehicle only:

1. When the overtaken vehicle is making or about to make a left turn, and its driver has given the required signal;
2. On a highway with unobstructed pavement, not occupied by parked vehicles, of sufficient width for two or more lines of moving vehicles in each direction;
3. On a one-way street or on any one-way roadway when the roadway is free from obstructions and of sufficient width for two or more lines of moving vehicles.

B. The driver of a vehicle may overtake and pass another vehicle on the right only under conditions permitting such movement in safety. Except where driving on paved shoulders is permitted by lawfully placed signs, no such movement shall be made by driving on the shoulder of the highway or off the pavement or main traveled portion of the roadway.



## CAC CORNER

The Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) will meet Tuesday, October 18, 2005 at 7:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Sully District Government Center, 4900 Stonecroft Boulevard. If you live or work in the Sully District, you are encouraged to attend this meeting. Your voice does make a difference. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

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## Neighborhood Watch training set for Wednesday, October 12

The Sully District Crime Prevention Office will offer Neighborhood Watch training on Wednesday, October 12, 2005 for any existing Neighborhood Watches who need new members trained. The training will begin at 7:00 p.m. and last approximately two hours. Now is the time to get new members trained! The next training will be held after the first of the year. Please try to attend if you are in need of training.

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## Parking Violations Most Commonly Seen

**Blocking or within 10 feet of a public or private driveway.**

**Parking within an intersection.**

**Parking on a crosswalk or within 20 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection.**

**Parking within 30 feet of a traffic sign or signal.**

**Parking commercial vehicles (gross weight 12,000 pounds or more) in a residential area.**

**Abandoned/unattended vehicles.**

**Parking in a posted fire lane (signs).**

**Blocking the use of curb ramps**



Sully District Police Station  
4900 Stonecroft Boulevard  
Chantilly, VA 20151

Main Phone 703-814-7000  
Fax 703-814-7013

File a Report on Line  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ps/police/homepage.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ps/police/homepage.htm)

Aggressive Driving—  
Report Online at  
[https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ps/police/traf\\_sfty\\_report.htm](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ps/police/traf_sfty_report.htm)



#### PHONE NUMBERS

**Fairfax County Crime Solvers :**  
1-866-411-TIPS

**Fairfax County Police Non-Emergency:**  
703-691-2131

**Sully District Crime Prevention Office:**  
703-814-7018

**Child Car Seat Installation:**  
**Sully District Station**  
703-814-7000 x 5140

**SAFE (Self Defense Class)**  
703-246-7806

**Citizen Reporting System (for reports only )**  
703-464-4756

## CRIME FLASH

## Be a Good Witness!

There may come a time in your life when you will witness a crime. One thing that can make or break a case in court is the testimony of witnesses. Properly identifying a suspect is one of the most crucial aspects in solving a case. What do you need to be looking for when you observe someone committing a crime? Below are some basic details that the police would like to know about a suspect.

SEX	RACE	AGE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	WEAPON TYPE
HAIR			HAT (color, type)		
GLASSES TYPE			TIE		
COMPLEXION			SHIRT		
SCARS/MARKS			COAT		
TATTOOS			TROUSERS		
			SHOES		

AUTO LICENSE, MAKE, COLOR	DIRECTION OF ESCAPE
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FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT  
**911** EMERGENCY

Observe the person or persons involved for the purpose of describing physical features and clothing. If possible, observe the person's escape for direction of travel and description of vehicle. Do not chase the suspect. Immediately dial 911. Before the police arrive, write down as much as you can remember. Give all information to the first officer to arrive on scene. We can best help you when you help us. Be a good witness!